

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ARAE-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 /080 W

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FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3226

INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN PRIORITY

UNCLAS PARAMARIBO 0217

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, NS

SUBJ: ARRON CABINET STAYS ON WITHOUT KTPi MINISTERS--AT

LEAST FOR NOW

REF : PARAMARIBO 0215

1. IN MARCH 17 PRESS CONFERENCE, PRIME MINISTER ARRON STUCK TO HIS POSITION THAT OPPOSITION'S CLAIM ASSERTING NPK GOVERNING COMBINATION HAS LOST ITS PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY HAS NOT BEEN PROVED AND INDICATED GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS WOULD CONTINUE TO BE FORWARDED TO PARLIAMENT FOR NORMAL HANDLING. ARRON ALSO DETAILED HISTORY OF HIS INVOLVEMENT IN SOEMITA AFFAIR CULMINATING IN SOEMITA'S DISMISSAL FROM THE CABINET FOLLOWING PARLIAMENT'S MARCH 16 DECISION TO ALLOW PROSECUTION OF HIM ON CORRUPTION CHARGES TO GO FORWARD. CABINET HAS ALSO ACCEPTED ORAL RESIGNATION OF KTPi MINISTER OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS SOEPERMAN, ALTHOUGH LATTER HAS NOT YET CONFIRMED HIS ACTION IN WRITING.

2. ARRON DEFENDED HIS HANDLING OF SOEMITA AFFAIR STRESSING HIS CABINET'S COMMITMENT TO CLEAN GOVERNMENT AND UPHOLDING
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SURINAM'S "SACRED" CONSTITUTION AND HIS OWN PRINCIPLES OF RIGHT AND WRONG. FIRMLY DENYING THAT ACTION AGAINST SOEMITA WAS A PERSONAL OR CONSCIOUS POLITICAL PLOT TO DESTROY THE KTPi OR THAT SOEMITA DOSSIER WAS LEAKED BY MINISTRY FOR GENERAL AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS (WHICH HE HEADS) AS SOME IN THE PRESS HAVE CHARGED, ARRON SAID THAT UPON HEARING THE FACTS IN THE CASE, HE HAD ADVISED SOEMITA OFFICIALLY AND "AS A FRIEND" TO

RESIGN IN KEEPING WITH HISTORICAL PRECEDENT AND A CONCERN FOR PUBLIC OPINION, AND IN ADDITION ASSURED SOEMITA HE WOULD BE RETURNED TO THE CABINET IF HE WERE FOUND INNOCENT.

3. DURING HOUR-AND-A-HALF-LONG PRESS CONFERENCE, ARRON TURNED ASIDE A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS DESIGNED TO ELICIT HIS VIEWS ON ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN PARLIAMENT. WHILE REFUSING TO DENY A REPORT NAMING JULY 25 AS THE DATE WHICH HAD BEEN SET FOR ELECTIONS, HE ONLY REITERATED HIS ASSURANCES THAT ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION, WHILE ADMITTING THEY "COULD BE" EARLIER THAN HAD BEEN PLANNED. HE INSISTED HE HAS NOT YET LAID A PROPOSAL FOR AN ELECTION DATE BEFORE THE CABINET. AS FOR WHO HAS THE MAJORITY IN PARLIAMENT, HE OBSERVED THAT THE OPPOSITION HAS NOT INTRODUCED A MOTION OF NO-CONFIDENCE NOR PROVED IT HAS A MAJORITY AND GAVE CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT NPK WOULD CONTINUE TO GOVERN WHILE AWAITING DEVELOPMENTS IN PARLIAMENT.

4. SOEMITA'S PORTFOLIO OF AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY, AND FISHERIES IS NOW BEING HANDLED BY MINISTER OF DISTRICT GOVERNMENT AND DECENTRALIZATION VAN GENDEREN (NPS), AND LABOR MINISTER FRIJMERSUM (PNR) IS TAKING OVER SOEPERMAN'S PORTFOLIO AT SOCIAL AFFAIRS. THIS IS IN KEEPING WITH USUAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR HANDLING PORTFOLIOS DURING TEMPORARY ABSENCE OF A MINISTER.

5. AS FOR NUMBERS SITUATION IN PARLIAMENT, NPK RETAINS AT LEAST IN THEORY NINETEEN SEATS, ALTHOUGH ONE BELONGS TO AN NPS MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT WHO RECENTLY SUFFERED A STROKE AND HAS UNCLASSIFIED

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NOT BEEN ABLE TO ATTEND PARLIAMENT MEETINGS. OPPOSITION CLAIMS TWENTY MEMBERS IN THE 39-MEMBER PARLIAMENT, BUT ONE OF THESE IS HPP REPRESENTATIVE HINDORIE, WHO HAS OFTEN VOTED WITH THE GOVERNMENT SINCE INDEPENDENCE; AND TWO ARE DISSIDENT NPS-ERS WHOSE POSSIBLE ACTIONS ARE NOT PREDICTABLE. ZURHELLEN

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